



***How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, by Thomas C. Foster **Read this one first.**
Your choice of a novel from the list below.

Welcome to Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition

I. Obtain a copy of Thomas C. Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* and read it in its entirety. You can buy or borrow the book (buying will allow you to annotate the book). I also found a free PDF version of it online.

Note to students: These short writing assignments will let you practice your literary analysis and they will help me get to know you and your literary tastes. Whenever I ask for an example from literature, you may use short stories, novels, plays, or films. I encourage you to refer to works you studied previous years in English. If your literary repertoire is thin and undeveloped, use Foster's Appendix to jog your memory or to select additional works to explore. At the very least, watch some of the "Movies to Read" that are listed on pages 293-294 or the following movies. **(Some of these movies are Rated R). You are not required to watch any of these movies; however, you may use them in answering the prompts.** *Gravity, Edward Scissorhand, Hoosiers, Princess Bride, The Others, Sliding Doors, What's Eating Gilbert Grape, The Royal Tenenbaums, A Beautiful Mind, Shawshank Redemption, Amelie, Pleasantville, Truman Show, Billy Elliot, Taxi Driver, Ides of March, The Matrix, Eternal Sunshine on the Spotless Mind, Shutter Island*

Please note that you are only required to do ten paragraph responses.

Again, remember your responses should be paragraphs -- not pages! Some chapters do not have a prompt. They present ideas that we will cover in the course of the year, but are not topics to respond on for summer reading.

As you compose each written response, re-phrase the prompt as part of your answer. In other words, I should be able to tell which question you are answering without referring back to the prompts. Support your opinions with evidence from the texts you use. You must back up your assertions with quotes from the texts. Always record the page numbers from quotes and use MLA guidelines for referencing page numbers. I will review this with you the first day of school in case you have any question on how to do this.

Attached you will find eighteen BRIEF writing assignment options (again paragraphs, not pages). You will choose **ten** of them to complete and submit via Google Drive. My email is moshane@mohawk.k12.pa.us. You may use the same work more than once in completing the other prompts. You may also use the novel you have chosen to read from the list provided.

You will need to read each chapter first in order to understand what the prompts are asking.

Writing Assignments for Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*

Introduction: How'd He Do That?

How do memory, symbol, and pattern affect the reading of literature? How does the recognition of patterns make it easier to read complicated literature? Discuss a time when your appreciation of a literary work was enhanced by understanding symbol or pattern.

Chapter 1 -- Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not) List the five aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to something you have read (or viewed) in the form used on pages 3-5.

Chapter 2 -- Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion

Choose a meal from a literary work and apply the ideas of Chapter 2 to this literary depiction.

Chapter 3 -- Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires

What are the essentials of the Vampire story? Apply this to a literary work you have read or viewed. [Look at works that have a vampire-like character, not a vampire story, so nothing from the *Twilight* series.]

Chapter 4 -- If It's Square, It's a Sonnet

Chapter 5 -- Now, Where Have I Seen Her Before?

Define intertextuality. Discuss three examples that have helped you in reading specific works.

Chapter 6 -- When in Doubt, It's from Shakespeare...

Discuss a work that you are familiar with that alludes to or reflects Shakespeare. Show how the author uses this connection thematically. Read pages 44-46 carefully. In these pages, Foster shows how Fugard reflects Shakespeare through both plot and theme. In your discussion, focus on theme.

Chapter 7 -- ...Or the Bible

I suggest you read the short story "Araby" by James Joyce (available online). Discuss biblical allusions that Foster does not mention. Look at the example of the "two great jars." Be creative and imaginative in these connections. You may use a title other than "Araby" if you wish.

Chapter 8 -- Hanseldee and Greteldum

Think of a work of literature that reflects a fairy tale. Discuss the parallels. Does it create irony or deepen appreciation? How?

Chapter 9 -- It's Greek to Me

Chapter 10 -- It's More Than Just Rain or Snow

Discuss the importance of weather in a specific literary work, not in terms of plot.

Chapter 11 -- ...More Than It's Gonna Hurt You: Concerning Violence

Chapter 12 -- Is That a Symbol?

Use the process described on page 106 and investigate the symbolism of the fence in "Araby." (Mangan's sister stands behind it.) or you may use another work.

Chapter 13 -- It's All Political

Assume that Foster is right and "it is all political." Use his criteria to show that a work is political.

Chapter 14 -- Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too

Apply the criteria on page 119 to a major character in a significant literary work. Try to choose a character that will have many matches. This is a particularly apt tool for analyzing film -- for example, *Star Wars*, *Braveheart*, *Gladiator*, *Matrix Trilogy*, *The Green Mile*, *Chronicles of Narnia*, and *The Lord of the Rings*.

Chapter 15 -- Flights of Fancy

Chapter 16 -- It's All About Sex...

Chapter 17 -- ...Except Sex.

Chapter 18 -- If She Comes Up, It's Baptism

Think of a "baptism scene" from a significant literary work. How was the character different after the experience? Discuss.

Chapter 19 -- Geography Matters...

Discuss at least four different aspects of a specific literary work that Foster would classify under "geography."

Chapter 20 -- ...So Does Season

Chapter 21 -- Marked for Greatness

Figure out Harry Potter's scar. If you aren't familiar with Harry Potter, select another character with a physical imperfection and analyze its implications for characterization.

Chapter 22 -- He's Blind for a Reason, You Know

Chapter 23 -- It's Never Just Heart Disease...

Chapter 24 -- ...And Rarely Just Illness

Recall two characters who died of a disease in a literary work. Consider how these deaths reflect the "principles governing the use of disease in literature" (215-217). Discuss the effectiveness of the death as related to plot, theme, or symbolism.

Chapter 25 -- Don't Read with Your Eyes

After reading Chapter 25, choose a scene or episode from a novel, play or epic written before the twentieth century. Contrast how it could be viewed by a reader from a previous century with how it might be viewed by a contemporary reader. Focus on specific assumptions that the author makes, assumptions that would not make it in this century.

Chapter 26 -- Is He Serious? And Other Ironies

Select an ironic literary work and explain the multivocal nature of the irony in the work.

II. Next, choose one of the works from the varied list below and read it like a professor. I will expect you to have completed the novel when we return from the summer.

III. Annotate your chosen work, if you check it out of the library you will need to annotate it using sticky notes. See the attached instructions on how to annotate. With your annotation, show off your interpretative skills by addressing the themes of this work, any pertinent symbols the author uses, and significant quotations whose analysis, in your opinion, sheds light on the text, and anything else that peaks your interest. From your annotation, it should be clear that you have read your other summer book, *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*: Is there a quest? A dark and stormy night? Baptism? How does geography matter? How is it political? Include your analysis as well as issues on which Foster has enlightened you. Bring your annotated text the first day of school.

Annotate well! You will be graded on how you have marked and/or sticky noted your novel.

Be prepared to write an essay the first week of school on your chosen novel.

So what do you have to do?

(1) Read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* and paragraph assignments.

(2) Use those notes and your understanding of the book to read your selected work "like a professor," and annotate your text.

If you have questions, you may contact me through email.

Choose one of the following novels to read and annotate.

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay
by [Michael Chabon](#)

Joe Kavalier, a young Jewish artist who has also been trained in the art of Houdini-esque escape, has just smuggled himself out of Nazi-invaded Prague and landed in New York City. His Brooklyn cousin Sammy Clay is looking for a partner to create heroes, stories, and art for the latest novelty to hit America - the comic book. Drawing on their own fears and dreams, Kavalier and Clay create the Escapist, the Monitor, and Luna Moth, inspired by the beautiful Rosa Saks, who will become linked by powerful ties to both men. With exhilarating style and grace, Michael Chabon tells an unforgettable story about American romance and possibility.

The Blind Assassin by [Margaret Atwood](#)

"Ten days after the war ended, my sister Laura drove a car off a bridge"

More than fifty years on, Iris Chase is remembering Laura's mysterious death. And so begins an extraordinary and compelling story of two sisters and their secrets. Set against a panoramic backdrop of twentieth-century history, *The Blind Assassin* is an epic tale of memory, intrigue and betrayal...

Serena by [Ron Rash](#)

The year is 1929, and newlyweds George and Serena Pemberton travel from Boston to the North Carolina mountains where they plan to create a timber empire. Although George has already lived in the camp long enough to father an illegitimate child, Serena is new to the mountains—but she soon shows herself to be the equal of any man, overseeing crews, hunting rattle-snakes, even saving her husband's life in the wilderness. Together this lord and lady of the woodlands ruthlessly kill or vanquish all who fall out of favor. Yet when Serena learns that she will never bear a child, she sets out to murder the son George fathered without her. Mother and child begin a struggle for their lives, and when Serena suspects George is protecting his illegitimate family, the Pembertons' intense, passionate marriage starts to unravel as the story moves toward its shocking reckoning.

A Visit from the Goon Squad by [Jennifer Egan](#)

Bennie is an aging former punk rocker and record executive. Sasha is the passionate, troubled young woman he employs. Here Jennifer Egan brilliantly reveals their pasts, along with the inner lives of a host of other characters whose paths intersect with theirs. With music pulsing on every page, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is a startling, exhilarating novel of self-destruction and redemption

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